

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2580

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR UR

SUBJECT: USDA ESTIMATE OF USSR GRAIN CROP

DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR FAS G&F DIVISION

1. USDA TASK FORCE REPORT NO. 14 ON MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 14
QUOTED AS FOLLOWS: "DUE TO THE WORSENING OF HARVESTING
CONDITIONS AND UNFAVORABLE OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT MONTH, IT HAS
BEEN DECIDED THAT THE ESTIMATE OF THE CROP WOULD REVERT TO
195 MILLION TONS."

2. WE AGREE THAT DONWARD SHIFT IN THE ESTIMATE IS WARRANTED
BUT WE CONTINUE TO FAVOR A LOWER FIGURE. OUR POSITION
ACKNOWLEDGES THE INCREASE IN GRAIN AREA, AND RECORD YIELDS IN
MANY AREAS EUROPEAN USSR. IT ALSO TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE
EXTREMELY POOR HARVESTING CONDITIONS IN MUCH OF CENTRAL
EUROPEAN USSR, VOLGA, URALS, AND VIRGIN LANDS.

3. AT THIS POINT, WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE USSR MAY
ANNOUNCE A GRAIN CROP OF APPROXIMATELY 190 MILLION METRIC
TONS -- A FIGURE WHICH WOULD PERMIT BREZHNEV TO BOAST OF THE
"LARGEST GRAIN CROP EVER."

4. THE DIFFERENCE OF FIVE MILLION TONS IN THESE ESTIMATES IS
ONLY 2.6 PERCENT -- WELL WITHIN ANY CONCEIVABLE RANGE OF ERROR
AFFORDED BY THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ARTS IN ESTIMATING THE
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SOVIET GRIN CROP.

5. REGARDLESS OF THE FIGURE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT FINALLY ANNOUNCES, IT WILL CONTAIN MUCH WATER -- AT LEAST AS MUCH AS IN 1972 WHEN ONLY VIRGIN LANDS HAD WET GRAIN. THE FINAL ESTIMATE OF THE USABLE GRAIN CROP, NET OF EXCESS MOISTURE AND DOCKAGE, MUST REFLECT THE EXTREPELY POOR HARVESTING CONDITIONS THIS YEAR.

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